9. Around 31111 sq. km. of critical/core tiger habitat identified in 17 States.

10. Memorandum of Understanding developed for better/concerted implementation of conservation inputs through tiger reserve States.

Financial steps

11. Financial and technical help is provided to the States under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, *viz.* Project Tiger and Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure of the States for providing effective protection to wild animals.

International Cooperation

12. India has a Memorandum of Understanding with Nepal on controlling trans-boundary illegal trade in wildlife and conservation, apart from a protocol on tiger conservation with China.

13. A Global Tiger Forum of Tiger Range Countries has been created for addressing international issues related to tiger conservation.

14. During the 14th meeting of the Conference of Parties to CITES, which was held from 3rd to 15th June, 2007 at The Hague, India introduced a resolution along with China, Nepal and the Russian Federation, with directions to Parties with operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale, for restricting such captive populations to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers. The resolution was adopted as a decision with minor amendments. Further, India made an intervention appealing to China to phase out tiger farming, and eliminate stockpiles of Asian big cats body parts and derivatives. The importance of continuing the ban on trade of body parts of tigers was emphasized.

Forest cover

1452. DR. V. MAITREYAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the total cover of forests in the country, State-wise as in 2007;

(b) the present level of forest covers as compared to 25 years back in the country, State-wise;

(c) whether the present level of forest cover affects the environment of the country thereby creating severe climatic changes; and

(d) if so, action plan under the serious consideration of the Government to improve the forest covers across the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) and (b) The Forest Survey of India, Dehradun, makes an assessment of forest cover in the country on biennial basis. The earliest forest

cover information of the country is available for the reference year 1987. The latest forest cover information has been released in the State of Forest Report 2005. A comparative account of the forest cover in 1987 and 2005, state-wise is given below:

Area in Km

State/UTs	Geographic Area	Forest Cover (SFR 1987)	Forest Cover (SFR 2005)
Andhra Pradesh	275,069	49,573	44,372
Arunachal Pradesh	83,743	64,132	67,777
Assam	78,438	25,160	27,645
Bihar	94,163	28,482	5,579
Chhattisgarh	135,191	—	55,863
Delhi	1,483	15	176
Goa	3,702	1,240	2,164
Gujarat	196,022	11,991	14,715
Haryana	44,212	513	1,587
Himachal Pradesh	55,673	12,480	14,369
Jammu & Kashmir	222,236	20,905	21,273
Jharkhand	79,714	32,268	22,591
Karnataka	191,791	10,292	35,251
Kerala	38,863	130,099	15,595
Madhya Pradesh	308,245	—	76,013
Maharashtra	307,713	45,616	47,476
Manipur	22,327	17,475	17,086
Meghalaya	22,429	16,466	16,988
Mizoram	21,081	19,084	18,684
Nagaland	16,579	14,394	13,719
Orissa	155,707	53,253	48,374
Punjab	50,362	943	1,558
Rajasthan	342,239	12,758	15,850
Sikkim	7,096	2,756	3,262
Tamil Nadu	130,058	17,472	23,044
Tripura	10,486	5,953	8,155
Uttar Pradesh«	240,928	31,226	14,127
Uttarakhand	53,483	—	24,442
West Bengal	88,752	8,432	12,413
Andaman & Nicobar	8,249	7,601	6,629
Chandigarh	114	2	15
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	491	238	221
Daman & Diu	112	0	8
Lakshadweep	32	0	25
Pondicherry	480	0	42
TOTAL	3,287,263	640,819	677,088

(c) As can be seen from the table above that the forest cover in the country has increased by 36,269 sq.km. in the past 18 years. A good forest cover helps in moderating extremes of the climatic changes.

(d) To further improve the forest cover in the country the following steps have been taken by the Ministry.

1. The Ministry is implementing National Afforestation Programme (NAP) through the Forest Development Agencies (FDA) at the forest division level and the Joint Forest Management Committees at the village level. The progress of NAP scheme as on 15.02.2008 is:

- No. of approved FDA projects: 753
- Cost of the projects (Rs. in crores): *

  2063.8
- Release made so far (Rs. in crores): 1461.1
- Project Area (million ha): 1.34
- No. of JFM committees (JFMCs): 26772

2. Ministry has launched Grants-in-Aid for Greening India Scheme in Tenth Plan to augment production and use of Quality Planting Material (QPM) so that productivity of public and private land plantations is increased, and individuals and communities are encouraged to take up more tree planting.

3. A new Scheme, Gram Van Yojana (GVY), has been mooted for afforestation on non-forest lands involving PRIs. Scheme to be launched in Eleventh Plan for which an allocation of Rs. 900 crores has been made.

4. New Eco-Task Force (ETF) Battalions of ex-service men are being established in collaboration with the States to regenerate difficult and inaccessible areas. Two new ETF battalions are being raised for Assam during the year.

Level of pollution

t l453. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Department of Meteorology of India has conducted a study regarding level of pollution in some cities of India;

(b) whether it is also a fact that after the initial showers of rain, testing done of the sample of water of these cities and nearby areas revealed that levels of sulfer dioxide and nitrogen oxide were high in the water which reach atmosphere through the polluted gases emitted by vehicles, thermal power plants and industries;

(c) whether it is also a fact that chances of catching Alzheimer disease are increased after drinkingpolluted water or eating vegetables produced by this polluted water; and

(d) if so, the measures taken for checking and eliminating the pollution? **t**

Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.